

**Eating in:** In the second of his series of seasonal recipes television chef and local restaurateur Chris Coubrough shares his tips for the perfect roast goose

# Traditional favourite will make Christmas special

**H**aving shot it myself, wild goose will be on my Christmas table this year. So, here, I am sharing my mouth-watering recipe – and some tips for cooking perfect roasties.

This is my first year eating goose on Christmas Day; we normally have pork, beef or lamb as I am not a big fan of turkey.

I shot the goose myself when wildfowling on the Stiffkey Marshes. I am new to shooting this year, but having grown up on a farm in New Zealand, I consider myself a country boy and love all things relating to it.

Over there, it was a case of shooting out of necessity, for food, rather than for sport.

When times were hard, we couldn't eat our livestock as that would take money away from the farm, so my family would shoot in the native bush that surrounded their land.

They would find introduced species, such as deer, taken out to New Zealand by the British settlers for sport.

I have very much enjoyed the social aspects of shooting in this country, especially in a rural county like Norfolk where it is such a big thing. A lot of my friends shoot and I thought I would have a go.

I went out with a wildfowler, who took me under his wing, so to speak! Wildfowling is an ancient tradition where people would shoot in the space between owned land and the sea, therefore not poaching. With Christmas coming up, my mind was on the goose, and I managed to bag one.

Wild bird, be it duck, pigeon or goose, is so much more tasty than the farmed variety.

Geese are very fit and lean, there is no evidence of long days at home in front of the television – they have worked for a living and flown great distances. This also means you have to be careful with the way you cook it, as it can dry out.

To get a really good roastie, I follow Grandma Coubrough and boil them first. If roast potatoes or chips taste good, it is always because it has been cooked twice.

Peel and chop the potatoes and boil them in salted water, then when just cooked, tip the water off, put them back on the element but turn the heat off.

This will generate enough heat to dry them out.

Cover with a lid and shake them, then baste in duck fat in a roasting tin and put in the oven to brown up, remembering to turn them.

I like to add garlic powder, celery salt and fresh thyme to mine.

Oh, and by the way, last week's recipe for Christmas Tart might have overdone it a little on the cinnamon (unless you really like it that way, of course). It should have read one *teaspoon* of the spice...

## Roast goose

...With duck-fat roast potato, Brussels sprouts, bacon, Chantenay carrots and chestnut sauce

1 x goose (4kg)  
Small tin of duck fat  
4x large Maris piper potatoes, peeled, blanched in salt water and cooled  
400g Brussels sprouts  
400g Chantenay carrots  
4oz Alsace bacon lardons

1. Make chestnut sauce (see recipe below) and store until needed.

2. Place a thick-bottomed tray into the oven and pre-heat to 190C/gas mark 5.

3. Prick skin of goose all over, season with salt and pepper, cover with foil and place on a rack in oven with the tray underneath.

Roast for three hours, removing foil 30 to 40 minutes before the end of cooking time to allow skin to crisp.

To test if it is cooked, pierce the fattest part of the goose with a skewer, if the juices run clear it's cooked.

Leave to rest for 20 to 30 minutes.

4. Remove the hot tray from the oven, add the duck fat to melt. Then add potatoes, season and place back into the oven, and cook until golden and crispy.

5. Put Brussels sprouts in a pan of boiling water and cook for eight minutes. Repeat with carrots in fresh salted water, again cooking for 8 minutes.

6. When roast potatoes are ready, remove from tray. Add the Alsace bacon to the tray with the remaining duck fat and cook in the oven for 5 minutes.

Mix in the Brussels sprouts with the bacon. Serve with the chestnut sauce.

## Chestnut sauce

150g shallots, chopped  
25g butter  
75g chestnuts, chopped (if fresh use 150g)  
6g thyme, chopped  
50ml white wine vinegar  
200ml Madeira  
600ml chicken stock  
200ml cream

1. Sweat the shallot with the thyme in the butter. Add the chestnuts, cook for a minute, then add the thyme, vinegar and Madeira. Reduce till dry.  
2. Add the stock and cream. Bring to a boil and simmer then puree.

## Wine choice

To complement the goose, John Atkinson recommends Bourgogne Pinot Noir, Louis Jadot, £9.99, from Tesco, or Bourgogne Rouge, Cote Chalonnaise, Chaumont 2005, from Adnams £9.99.

Bordeaux and the Rhone may get all the muscular epithets, but red burgundy is the head-turning babe in the French fine wine pantheon. Chris's goose is rich, and the temptation is to find a big wine that goes toe-to-toe with the bird. If you like a full-bodied styles, then join the battle with a shiraz or zinfandel. My choice is red burgundy: the acidity will slice through the richness of the meat, while the wine's rooty, sarsaparilla-fruitiness will serve up a good contrast to its strong flavours.

